DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BUSINESS PLAN 2004–05

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1. Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

In keeping with the Government of Nova Scotia's commitment to be more accountable to the public for its actions, all departments and agencies are required to prepare annual business plans describing their priorities for the next fiscal year. The Department of Education is proud to present its business plan for 2004–05.

The Premier noted, in the *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia*, that education is the cornerstone of a strong economy and is vital to personal growth and professional success. Government's priorities are to focus on the student, put basics first, provide classrooms with more resources, and be more accountable for results, from pre-primary to grade 12, post-secondary, and beyond. Only by creating a culture of learning for life, focussing on all levels of education can learning translate into success for a lifetime.

Many challenges exist for the P–12 education system including declining enrolment, social and health issues, competing demands for program and service improvements, isolated rural schools and class sizes, professional development for teachers, and aging infrastructure. The department's three year plan, *Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success (2002),* introduced a number of initiatives to address these challenges. The department is continuing to implement these initiatives and introduce new initiatives identified in the *Blueprint* to address these challenges.

Nova Scotia's post-secondary education sector comprises many universities known for their traditional strengths and for a dynamic, young community college. The department will work with universities in seeking to sustain the quality for which their offerings are known, while safeguarding access. We will also continue to make investments to expand the Nova Scotia Community College and assist Nova Scotian students financially in completing their post-secondary studies.

At a time when Nova Scotia's labour market is facing such challenges as an aging workforce, rapid technological change, globalization, out-migration of youth and imbalance in the supply and demand of skilled workers, the release of the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework Action Plan for 2003–04* outlines a plan to address these challenges. The capacity of such groups as business, labour, industry, communities, and education and training institutions to work together is key if innovative and timely strategies are to be implemented to meet these challenges.

Together, these initiatives will focus on building a high quality education system, a strong workforce, and a bright future for all Nova Scotians.

Original signed by:

Honourable Jamie Muir
Minister of Education

Original signed by:

Dennis Cochrane
Deputy Minister

2. Mission

The department's goals, guiding principles and strategies help to develop an environment where education and training are valued, achievement is celebrated, and learners are provided with opportunities and tools for rewarding and successful learning experiences.

Our mission is...

to provide excellence in education and training for personal fulfilment and for a productive, prosperous society.

Belief statements that underpin this mission statement reflect the department's commitment to access to lifelong learning opportunities, full participation at all levels of the education and training system for all Nova Scotians, and accountability of all partners.

3. Planning Context

The department has a broad mandate that spans the education and training system from pre-grade primary through to all post-secondary and adult learning destinations. These destinations include adult education, apprenticeship, community college, private career college, university, and other venues supporting human development. Other responsibilities include public libraries and the Youth Secretariat.

In 2003–04, the Department of Education's budget including assistance to universities was $1,186.0M. As part of a government wide initiative to address significant forecast over-expenditures within the provincial public sector, a Budget Management Plan was adopted in November 2003. As part of this Plan, the department's expenditures were to decrease by $5.7M. Currently, the department is forecasting a $4.7M under-expenditure from its original $1,186.0M budget.

In 2003–04, the Department of Education is structured into eight operational units which are described briefly as follows.

Public Schools Branch
This branch comprises African Canadian Services, English Program Services, French Second Language Program Services, Learning Resources and Technology, Mi'kmaq Services, Regional Education, Student Services, and Testing and Evaluation. It is responsible for all educational programs and services for the English language public school system, testing and evaluation, educational technology and school board liaison.

Acadian and French Language Services Branch
The Acadian and French Language Services Branch monitors and approves curriculum development for French first language education. The branch negotiates and co-ordinates activities related to federal–provincial funding agreements for French first and second language education in Nova Scotia. This branch also serves to advise the Deputy Minister and Minister on all matters related to French first language education issues in the province.

Higher Education Branch
This branch comprises Universities and Colleges Liaison, the Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities, Student Financial Assistance, Private Career Colleges, Rehabilitation Programs and Services, the Provincial Library, and the International Education Office. This branch promotes access to advanced education and knowledge for Nova Scotians in partnership with post-secondary institutions and regional public libraries.

Skills and Learning Branch
This branch comprises Adult Education, Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development, Immigration and Settlement, Labour Market Partnerships, Youth Services, Provincial Apprenticeship Board, Forum of Labour Market Ministers'(FLMM) Secretariat, FLMM–Labour Market Information Secretariat and Labour Market Development Secretariat. It co-ordinates Skills Nova Scotia, the province's labour market skill development strategy. It also works collaboratively with a range of government, industry, labour, business, community, and education partners to design, implement, and evaluate, policies, programs, and services that support learning and skill development at home, at work, and in the community.

Corporate Policy Branch
This branch comprises Policy and Planning and Information Management. It is responsible for providing advice and support in policy, planning, legislation, research, coordination, and information services to all areas of the department. This branch focuses on ensuring the department has clear, achievable and appropriate policies in place, decisions are based on high quality research undertaken to address current and emerging issues, the business planning and budgeting processes are integrated, and the accountability requirements of the department are met.

Corporate Services Branch
This branch comprises Financial Management, Grants and Audit, Facilities Management, Information Technology Services, and Statistics and Data Management. It is responsible for the delivery of business and support services to the Department of Education including: the provision of facilities planning and capital projects, financial management and comptrollership responsibilities, information technology, the province-wide delivery of data communications, and the management of educational

related data and statistics. This branch is also responsible for providing selected services to school boards including co-ordination of pupil transportation with school boards.

Human Resources & Legal Services Branch

This branch supports activities associated with the move to single-tier collective bargaining, maximizes the value of dollars spent for legal advice, supports school boards in addressing current and emerging issues, enhances effective human resource planning in the education system, provides teacher certification and classification functions, and delivers the full range of comprehensive human resource services and strategic advice necessary to support the department's business objectives. It is part of a corporate services unit which also provides human resource services to other departments.

Communications

Communications provides communications support for government and Department of Education programs, policies, and initiatives. This includes communications planning, issues management, media relations, special events, stakeholder communications, and promotion/marketing.

The Planning Environment

A strong, diverse economy remains a priority for this government and education has been identified as a cornerstone of economic development. Education must be recognized as a lifelong endeavor; learning at all stages of life will maintain a strong workforce to support a prosperous, sustainable economy. Needs change, and the department must have a strong policy development and research capacity to address these current and emerging needs. Within this context, a number of challenges are identified.

Demographic Shift

The education system continues to face considerable demographic pressures in the short term planning context, particularly in rural and small schools. The current service delivery model bases funding on enrolment. As enrolment declines, as is the current trend, financial pressures increase. Also to be considered in this demographic shift is the aging population of teachers. As teachers retire, it will become more difficult to find qualified regular teachers, especially in specialized areas of teaching like mathematics, sciences, physical, technical, and special education, fine arts and French first and second languages. This same challenge is faced by Nova Scotia's colleges and universities with their need to replace an aging faculty with highly qualified replacements.

Accountability

The department must strengthen its accountability of the quality of the education it provides to its learners. A key element of accountability is to ensure that standards of quality are established, measured and reported upon. These standards enable the system to measure its achievements and determine where improvements are required.

Technology for Learners

Another pressure in today's learning environment is the ever changing technology. Ensuring that students and workers are versed in advancements in technology and communications is key to competing in today's labour force. However, providing, supporting and refreshing technology continues to be a challenge for the education sector because of the constantly changing technological environment that we learn and work in and because of the related costs to these continuous upgrades.

Healthy Students

It is now recognized that good health must be integrated into all aspects of our life, from home to school to work. Pressure on the education system is increasing to address social and health issues and to provide more programming and services in social, health and life skills that were once primarily the responsibility of the family and community.

Skilled and Knowledgeable Workforce

There are also a number of challenges for the department in facilitating the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. The aging population, impact of technology on work, development and retention of skilled workers, increasing education requirements for employment, continuous upgrading, and rising costs of education require new partnerships and creative approaches to skill development.

Aging Infrastructure

Another ongoing challenge for the education system is the maintenance and building of school facilities for all levels of education. Facilities require continuous maintenance because of aging, changes to building codes, and requirements for new technology. Infrastructure must support learning, teaching, and research functions in order that students at all levels gain the most from their learning experience. It is also important for college and university campuses to attract the most highly qualified professors to maintain Nova Scotia's competitive edge in its research and innovation capacity.

Competing Demands

At all levels of education there are increasing expectations, competing demands and limited funding. Stakeholders seek specific programming according to their needs and expect government to respond, workers require continuous upgrading in curriculum and technology to stay current and compete in the labour market, and teachers and professors need continuous professional development to remain effective in teaching and research.

Operating in our current fiscal environment means shifting focus and financial resources as needs change to address challenges or shortcomings in other areas of the education system. We must continue to

build strong foundations of quality, standards, accountability and competitiveness across the education and training system within the fiscal capacity of the province.

4. Goals of the Department

The Government of Nova Scotia has adopted five main priorities for public policy initiatives that must be addressed within the context of fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget. Based on the *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia,* these corporate priorities are reiterated in the government business plan as follows:

- building greater prosperity
- health care—better, faster health care and healthier Nova Scotians
- learning is succeeding
- protecting what Nova Scotians value— seniors, families and Nova Scotians in need, environment, cultural diversity, consumer protection/insurance, and safer communities/streets
- fiscal responsibility and accountability

As noted in the government's *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia*, education is the cornerstone of a strong economy and society. The government's approach is to focus on the student, to put the basics first, provide classrooms with more resources, and be more accountable for results, from primary to grade 12, post-secondary, and beyond. Government is focussing on:

- improving the performance of Nova Scotia students in national and international testing
- reducing the student-teacher ratio
- fostering a culture of learning earlier in a child's life
- maximizing opportunities for young people to live and work at home

The Department of Education's goals for 2004–05 are focussed on fulfilling the government priorities and are as follows:

- improve conditions for learning in the public education system
- strengthen educational programming and services in priority areas
- enable the provision of relevant and high quality post-secondary education and training
- promote healthy, active learning communities and families
- foster access, equity and diversity through and within education and training
- develop a skilled and adaptable workforce
- strengthen accountability in the areas of governance, resource investment and utilization, and reporting of results

5. Core Business Areas and Functions

The mandate of the Department of Education spans the public school system, community colleges, universities, private career colleges, a comprehensive system of adult learning, apprenticeship, public libraries, and other programs and services to support lifelong learning. The core business areas of the department mirror very closely the department's operational organization. The six key core business areas are primary–12 education, higher education, skills and learning, corporate policy, corporate services, and human resources and legal services. The related core business functions are identified for each of these areas below.

1. Primary–12 Education

The functions under this core business area involve coordinating the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of programs, courses, services, and related policies and resources for the public school system, and correspondence studies. These include English and French first language and second language programs; provincial, national, and international assessments of student achievement; special education; comprehensive guidance and counselling; multicultural education; support services for the educational achievement of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians; the evaluation and provision of print and technological learning resources; professional development for administrators and teachers; and the provision of advice to school boards in educational and operational matters.

The functions of Primary–12 Education are as follows:

- advise Minister on all matters relating to P-12 education
- identify priorities, co-ordinate the development, and evaluate the implementation of public school programs, policies, educational services, and related priorities
- provide direction and advice to school boards on all matters pertaining to public education
- co-ordinate the development and implementation of educational programming and services to support Acadian, African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq students, and students enrolled in French and English second language programs
- co-ordinate the development and implementation of programming and services for students with special needs and other student support services

- evaluate resources to be included in *Authorized Learning Resources* and provide technology services to support the curriculum
- co-ordinate school improvement planning and accreditation programs
- co-ordinate provincial, national, and international assessments and publish an annual *Minister's Report to Parents* on the results
- plan and conduct in-service teacher education and summer institutes, and assist school boards in developing and providing professional development programs
- negotiate and administer federal assistance programs provided under Official Languages in Education Program for French first and second language programs
- provide consultative and advisory services to other education partners such as universities, colleges, other departments and agencies, professional associations and organizations, advocacy groups, the media, and the general public regarding public school policies, programs, and educational services and engage in interdepartmental initiatives

2. Higher Education

The Higher Education core business area contributes to the Department of Education's lifelong learning mandate by providing funding, services and encouragement to post-secondary institutions and libraries to: maintain access to high quality post-secondary education; promote formal and informal learning opportunities; and support teacher training, professional development, and certification.

Further, this core business area supports the provision of sufficient, highly qualified personnel to meet labour market demand and the need for a knowledgeable, engaged citizenry.

The functions of Higher Education are as follows:

- advise the Minister on all matters relating to universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
- provide funding and support to universities, the NSCC, and regional public libraries
- lead or participate in federal–provincial and interprovincial negotiations related to post-secondary education

- advise the Minister on matters relating to training at private career colleges and develop related policy
- assist adult Nova Scotians with disabilities to obtain access to and to succeed in post-secondary training and employment
- assist the post-secondary education institutions to meet the needs of the labour market
- develop student loan policy, manage the student debt loan portfolio, and administer the Canada and Nova Scotia Student Loan Programs
- co-ordinate regional public library services and promote library cooperation at national, regional, and provincial levels

3. Skills and Learning

The Skills and Learning core business area co-ordinates the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, services and resources related to labour market development with a focus on the following: adult learning, apprenticeship, labour market information, federal–provincial relations, immigration, skill development, and youth. This core business area co-ordinates the province's Skills Nova Scotia strategy. It also facilitates partnerships among government, industry, business and labour, education and training providers, and community organizations to foster labour market growth through skill development.

The functions of Skills and Learning are as follows:

- advise the Minister on matters related to labour market development including adult learning, apprenticeship, labour market information, federal–provincial relations, immigration, skill development, and youth
- co-ordinate and support the implementation of the province's Skills Nova Scotia strategy and publish an annual action plan and year end report
- co-ordinate federal–provincial relations related to labour market development
- create labour market policy and undertake labour market research including the collection, analysis, and dissemination of labour market information
- administer the Nova Scotia apprenticeship training system and the Provincial Apprenticeship Board

- identify priorities and co-ordinate the development, delivery, and evaluation of adult learning programs and youth initiatives including apprenticeship, co-operative employment opportunities, literacy, essential skills, and high school equivalency and completion

- lead provincial immigration matters and federal–provincial activity related to immigration and settlement programs and services
- co-ordinate the development of strategic initiatives that respond to emerging labour market skill development needs in partnership with industry, business, labour, education and training providers, and community-based organizations

4. Corporate Policy

The Corporate Policy core business area provides advice and support in policy, planning, legislation, research, coordination, and information services to all areas of the department. This branch focuses on ensuring the department has clear, achievable and appropriate policies in place, decisions are based on high quality research undertaken to address current and emerging issues, the business planning and budgeting processes are integrated, and the accountability requirements of the department are met. This core business area also includes the following responsibilities: the departmental library, records management, co-ordination of appointments to agencies, boards and commissions, and administration and advice on the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The functions of Corporate Policy are as follows:

- establish the policy and planning agenda of the Department of Education and co-ordinate the development, communication, and evaluation of policy for all departmental jurisdictions

- provide advice and direction on the development of policies and strategies relating to the department's mandate

- lead strategic planning and business planning for the department, enhance the integration of planning and budgeting processes, and provide guidance and support to school boards in the development of their business plans

- support a strategic focus on corporate departmental issues and co-ordinate the legislative agenda and related processes

- initiate and co-ordinate policy proposals, departmental positions, cabinet submissions, and briefing notes to support the Deputy Minister, Minister, and Premier, ensuring adherence to the goals and

priorities of Government and providing sufficient and appropriate information to support Cabinet decision making

- ensure the department meets its accountability requirements through the Mid-year Performance Report, Quarterly Reports and Annual Accountability Report
- undertake focussed research to address current and emerging issues, and provide advice and co-ordinate surveys, evaluations and studies pertaining to various programs and operations across all sections of the department
- co-ordinate interprovincial and intergovernmental relations in matters relating to the responsibilities of the department
- administer the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for the department and advise on issues related to access to information and privacy
- manage departmental information resources and library services, and develop, implement, and maintain the department's records management system
- provide an electronic and print publishing service
- co-ordinate the appointments process for agencies, boards, and commissions under the department's mandate

5. Corporate Services

The Corporate Services core business area involves the provision of a range of services to the department, school boards, NSCC and other colleges, universities, public libraries, and other related organizations to assist the department in meeting its mandate. These services are in the key areas of financial management and control, facilities and transportation, information technology, statistics and data management, and the distribution of learning resources and related products.

The functions of Corporate Services are as follows:

- provide comptrollership functions for the department inclusive of financial reporting, budget management, internal control, and administration; and administer provincial grants to school boards, community colleges, universities, community learning organizations, and public libraries
- undertake grant-recipient audits, facilities planning, and equipment acquisition

- establish accountability and financial guidelines for school boards and monitor school board financial performance

- manage the province's school capital program, including the construction of new schools, major alterations and additions to existing schools, the leased school program, and the province's school indoor air quality program

- monitor student transportation systems of school boards

- operate the school book bureau
- provide co-ordinated wide area network (EDnet) communications and services to schools, school boards, NSCC, other colleges and libraries for administrative systems and access to the Internet by students, teachers and the public

- co-ordinate and support the use of information technology and provide related consultative and advisory services throughout the education and training system

- develop and maintain a comprehensive management information system and statistical service relating to public education matters

6. Human Resources and Legal Services

The Human Resources and Legal Services core business area involves the provision of a range of services to the department, school boards and teachers. These services are in the key areas of human resources management, labour relations and collective bargaining, legal advisory and representational services, and teacher certification. The Human Resources and Legal Services Branch is a corporate service unit which also serves other departments.

In the Department of Education, the functions of Human Resources and Legal Services are as follows:

- provide labour relations and legal advisory and representational services to school boards on matters of provincial scope to build expertise and consistency across the public school system in dealing with common issues including collective bargaining, grievance handling and arbitration, human resources planning, and accountability structures

- provide teacher certification and classification functions, and recognize and maintain teacher service records

- provide training and development advice and delivery through effective performance management practices to support business plan priorities and individual development needs

6. Priorities for 2004–05 by Core Business Area

To meet the business planning guidelines, the department's priorities are organized according to the lead core business area of the department.

Core Business Area Priorities: Primary–12 Education

The Department will work with the Departments of Community Services and Health to develop the new Ready to Learn voluntary, free pre-school program for four-year-olds.

The Class Size Initiative will expand from grade primary to cap grade 1 classes at 25 students as of September 2004.

As part of the Literacy Success Strategy, the department plans to expand the early intervention Reading Recovery™ program to ensure that this program is accessible to all grade 1 classes by September 2005. The Observation Survey and the Sondage d'observation en lecture-écriture will be administered as part of research with grade 1 French immersion students. This will assist in determining appropriate interventions for French immersion students struggling with reading and writing.

An elementary literacy assessment will be administered to grade 6 students; individual student results will be provided to parents. The department will provide leadership to assist boards in implementing a support strategy for students struggling with reading and writing and will train more teachers to be literacy mentors. The department will provide additional funding in 2004–05 to provide increased support for these struggling students. As part of the literacy assessment initiative, a Student Tracking and Monitoring System will be developed. The system will keep track of students identified as struggling readers and writers and monitor supports/interventions provided.

Mathematics Strategy implementation will include the provision of textbooks for grade 3 students, teaching resources for grades primary–6, and information and materials for parents to support their children's mathematics learning in the early years. The department plans to assist boards in providing site-based professional development for teachers primary–9 and will train more math mentors. Senior high mathematics initiatives will include implementation support for Math Plus, expansion of the Math Essentials pilot, piloting and implementation of Calculus 12; and professional development for grades 10, 11, and 12 math leaders in every school.

In addition to the Elementary Literacy Assessment, in 2004–05 the department will administer the Junior High Mathematics Program Assessment, and the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) Science Assessment. Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) will be administered in English 12, English/Communications 12, Chemistry12 (English and French immersion), and Physics 12.

Development work will continue in Mathematics12/Mathématiques12, Advanced Mathematics12/Mathématiques avancée12, Calcul différential et intégral 12.
The department plans to expand access to information technology in schools. In 2004–05, the department will provide new computers, software, and accessories for grades 4–6 through the Information Economy Initiative (IEI) and funding for technicians in addition to those funded by school boards. The department will deliver at least 3,000 refurbished computers to school boards through the Technology Recycling Program. Funding will also be allocated to school boards to provide professional development and technical support.

As part of the Time to Learn Strategy, the department will implement new requirements for the allotment of a minimum of 60 minutes instruction daily in grades 7 and 8 for mathematics, for English language arts in the English program, and for French language arts in the immersion program. New requirements to ensure student access to semestered courses in grades 10–12 will also be implemented in September 2004.

Implementation of the *Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success* plan for students with special needs will include the provision of year two funding targeted to develop new programming to address gaps in services, and enhance the ratios of core professional service providers; such as resource teachers, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists, in school boards. Funding will also be provided to assist boards in providing assistive technology and related services.

A teaching resource will be developed to assist classroom teachers and resource teachers in addressing the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The department will develop a new tuition support program for students with special needs to expand options outside the public school system based on established criteria for designated support. Professional development will be provided for existing teacher assistants to upgrade their skills, as necessary, to meet the needs of the children they support.

The department will provide additional funding to continue working toward implementation of key recommendations of the *BLAC Report on Education.*

The department will implement operational guidelines, and provide related professional development workshops for student support workers for African Nova Scotian students. Funding will be provided to the Council on African Canadian Education to facilitate development and delivery of Africentric Learning Institute programs.

School boards' implementation of the Racial Equity Policy will be supported by the department by providing professional development and multicultural teaching resources, and evaluating and reporting on the boards' 2003-04 implementation of the policy.

The department will release the Minister's Response to the issues raised through the school advisory councils (SAC) consultation. The response will address the need for clear roles and responsibilities; orientation support for new and current members; strengthening of relationships and communication between and among SACs, and the school board and the department; and supporting SACs in enhancing parent-school communication. These directions will help to ensure that parents and the school community have a meaningful voice in support of quality education in Nova Scotia.

An interactive website will be launched to provide parents with information on public school programs and services, and expectations for student learning and achievement at different grade levels.

Implementation of the Literacy Success Strategy and the Mathematics Strategy will include specific initiatives designed to better inform and increase the involvement of parents and school advisory councils in supporting and improving student achievement in these priority areas. School boards are expected to develop and report on action plans and targets to increase student achievement in literacy and mathematics.

The School Improvement Planning and Accreditation pilot project, which currently involves 16 schools, will be evaluated in 2004–05 with a view to moving forward with a province-wide roll out in subsequent years. Resources will be developed to support the process and an organizational plan prepared to include all schools in the school improvement planning and accreditation process.

A framework will be developed that sets standards and the process for professional-growth planning. In consultation with school principals, teachers will develop growth plans that will reflect priorities in the school improvement plan linked to student achievement.

Implementation of the Positive and Effective Behavioural Support initiative, including *School Code of Conduct Guidelines*; a resource guide, *Meeting Behaviour Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments;* and other anti-bullying initiatives will be supported by the department.

Working with school boards and health community partners, the department will help to develop healthy eating initiatives in schools. The implementation of new health personal development and relationships curriculum will begin in grade 7. The Department will promote anti-smoking programs in schools and support Atlantic Wellness Strategy components that involve public schools. The department will also support Active School Community pilots and other initiatives designed to improve delivery of physical education and physical activity programs.

The department will develop Pathways resources for guidance counsellors, students, parents, and teachers to support career education and counselling services. These will include on-line resources to support the implementation of the Nova Scotia Student Life/Work Portfolio in grade 7. The

department will implement the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program and provide professional development to support the program.

P-12 Education Curriculum Initiatives

... English and French Second Language curriculum

The department will monitor and support implementation of Active Young Readers P–6/Jeunes lecteurs actifs M à 6 initiatives through the provision of resources and professional development. Writers in Action/Écrivains à l'oeuvre will be expanded to grade 6 and Active Readers/Lecteurs actifs to grade 9, including the provision of student resources as well as professional development and resources for teachers. A classroom assessment resource for grades 6–8, *Active Readers Assessment Resource for Young Adolescents* will be introduced. A classroom resource to assess grade 9 immersion students' French language skills will be field tested. A French immersion classroom assessment resource for Jeunes lecteurs actifs 4 à 6 will be implemented.

Senior high literacy initiatives will include English 10 Plus pilots; the introduction of *Writers in Action 10: A Teaching Resource,* and the development of Écrivains à l'oevre 10 et 11 resources; the introduction of *English 10: A Reading Resource,* and professional development for grade 10 teacher leaders.

Access to public school courses through correspondence study courses and on-line delivery will be increased. Correspondence study courses scheduled for implementation in 2004–05 include Mathematics 8, Mathematics Foundations 10, Biology 11, Chemistry 11, English Communications 12, and Geology 12. The range of advanced high school in-class and distance education courses will be expanded, beginning in 2004–05, with the development of a framework for the provision of advanced social studies, fine arts, and language arts courses. In partnership with universities, the department will develop new advanced physics courses for grades 11 and 12.

Mi'kmaw Language 7 will be implemented and the department will develop Mi'kmaw Language 8 and 9. Teaching and learning resources will be developed to support Mi'kmaw language curriculum delivery at these grade levels.

... French First Language curriculum

A four-year pilot project was initiated in 2003 which saw the CSAP assume the lead role in curriculum development and implementation for its students. The Department will monitor, review, and approve the annual development and implementation plan, and the curriculum developed under this pilot project.

Core Business Area Priorities: Higher Education

In order to sustain the quality and accessibility of university education in Nova Scotia, the department will seek to negotiate multi-year agreements with the universities that will give them stable funding and enable them to restrain tuition fee increases, beginning in 2005–06.

The department will continue to invest in the development of the NSCC. Liaising with NSCC on its Development Initiative, the department will increase capacity through renovations at six rural campuses and the I.W. Akerley campus.

A designation policy will be introduced for post-secondary institutions specifying standards they must meet in order for their students to be eligible for student loan funding.

Public libraries will be recognized by the department as key players in the delivery of e-government services. A more formal relationship will be developed between the Community Access Program and the public library system to ensure efficiency, equity, and stability in the provision of these services.

The identification of additional resources at the end of 2003–04 enabled the government to invest an extra $750,000 in Nova Scotia's public libraries to assist them in achieving the minimum service standards as set out in the *Standards for Nova Scotia Regional Public Libraries*. A further $250,000 will be invested in public libraries in 2004–05.

The department will continue to work with post-secondary institutions, other partner organizations, and disability advocacy groups to assist disabled students to make the transition from grade 12 through post-secondary education and into employment.

Possible approaches to implement a graduate follow-up survey of private career college students will be researched to determine the extent to which students benefited from their course of study and the relevancy of the curriculum and program supports in their transition to the labour market or further education.

A review of the Training Completion Fund for private career colleges, including a determination of whether it is funded at an appropriate level, will be undertaken.

Core Business Area Priorities: Skills and Learning

The department will lead the province's discussions, in collaboration with other provincial departments, with the federal government with respect to the re-negotiation of the Labour Market Development Agreement.

The department will contribute to the development of initiatives under the federal-provincial joint priorities Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework and the Canada-Nova Scotia Innovations Team.

The department's role of hosting the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat will continue until March 2005 and contribute to the development of federal-provincial workplans for Workplace Training and Apprenticeship, literacy and essential skills, immigration, and Aboriginal labour market issues.
The department will convene forums for representatives from industry, labour, education and training providers, community organizations, government, and individuals to discuss emerging labour force skill development challenges and opportunities facing Nova Scotia.
Partners, working with the department, will develop labour market information methodologies, products and services that inform the skill development and labour market decisions of individuals, business and labour, policy makers, and education providers.

The identification, development and implementation of strategic initiatives will be undertaken to respond to the emerging labour market skill development challenges. This will include taking advantage of opportunities through partnerships such as those with the Association of Industry Sector Councils, and construction and aerospace industries.

A sector liaison program will be created by the department to improve communication with industry sector councils and to identify areas for collaboration and partnership around common labour market development goals.

Working with partners, the department will develop a plan for a continuum of career development programs and services that help workers, students, and the unemployed access career development, education, and employment counselling to plot career paths that lead to gainful employment and self-fulfilment.

The department will increase the participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeship and workplace education programs through partnerships and initiatives such as the Joint Registration Agreement with Membertou First Nations, and the One Journey Project, a partnership with the Department of Community Services.

Partnerships to initiate a program focussing on helping at-risk youth develop personal and employability skills through engagement in construction projects, community development, and academic upgrading will be developed. Successful participants will be better able to access education and training or the labour market.

Working with partners, the department will develop a comprehensive, co-ordinated immigration strategy in which all levels of government, business, and community play a role in creating a welcoming Nova Scotia. In support of this strategy, the department will work with federal and provincial governments to advance a Foreign Credential Assessment Service to assist immigrants and employers in Atlantic Canada. In order to support a welcoming community approach, the department will ensure its language training programs are complementary to those provided by Citizenship and Immigration by identifying service delivery gaps and addressing those needs in collaboration with federal partners.

Working with partners, the Department will help to support the expansion of Read to Me!/Lis-moi une histoire! into 11 hospitals with obstetric care and support the creation of regional strategies for promoting family learning which include practitioner training.

In concert with Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse, the department will begin a multi-year Francophone family literacy strategy with financial support from the National Literacy Secretariat under the Official Languages Minority Community program.

Working with other government partners, the department will create a Youth Apprenticeship Initiative. This initiative will allow high school students to experience careers in skilled trades and technologies and, thereby, make more informed career choices.

The capacity of apprenticeship training will be increased to offer more sections of training to registered apprentices to enable the efficient and effective progress of all apprentices toward certification.

A mentor training program will be developed for supervising journeypersons to increase the quality of the practical component of apprenticeship training by enabling employers to have professionally trained journeyperson mentors on staff.

Phase II of the Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative will be carried out resulting in the development of a learning plan for every apprentice and trade qualifier. The initiative will support apprentices with essential skills needs through various avenues such as itinerant tutoring and workplace education programming.

As a part of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, the department will work with community-based literacy organizations in the province on a provincial program review and sustainability initiative. This initiative will look at maximizing resources and exploring new service delivery and governance models.

Six new courses in the Adult Learning Program including: Technical Writing IV, Introductory Sociology IV, Science III, Communications III, Social Studies III, and Mathematics III, will be implemented. Two new courses, *Français Niveau 2* and *Sciences Niveau,* in the Formation générale des adultes (FGA) will also be developed. The department will also develop new curriculum for FGA level III, and

create new learning outcomes for *Français Niveau 4*. A review and enhancement of Career Skills Level IV and a review of all Level II curriculum will also be undertaken in partnership with delivery partners.

Core Business Area Priorities: Corporate Policy

In response to the Education Consultative Forum (ECF) Sub-Committee Report on Teacher Supply and Demand, an Early Hiring Job Fair was held at Nova Scotia universities offering Bachelor of Education programs, in January and February 2004, involving the department, all Nova Scotia school boards, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. This was undertaken to address current and potential teacher shortages in certain subject areas. An evaluation of this process will be completed in April 2004.

In response to projected shortages in the supply of teachers, a survey of substitute teachers and recent graduates will be finalized and reported on to provide information to school boards to support their planning activities and decision making.

A database to track and store information on copyright permissions will be developed by the Department. Copyright permissions are obtained from the relevant copyright holder when the department uses content from external sources.

Through the CMEC Copyright Consortium, the Department will participate in efforts to encourage the federal government to ensure that the education system has access to technology-enhanced learning through its copyright reform initiative.

Core Business Area Priorities: Corporate Services

The department will identify school capital needs and deliver approved projects. Four school construction projects are now underway and will carry on in 2004–05. Five additional school projects will have construction begin in 2004–05.

The addition and alteration program will enhance and/or replace major school building components on a priority basis. To be implemented in 2004–05, sixteen schools are being added to and altered under a phased multi-year program to address building condition, environmental, and program issues at these schools. A database of school renovation and maintenance needs will be developed in conjunction with school boards.

Community use of school facilities varies across the province in terms of access, rates, and hours of availability. School boards will adjust their practices in 2004–05 to comply with the policy framework developed to standardize access and rate charges, and to ensure facilities are available for community and youth use for as many hours as possible.

The project to implement SAP's HR and Payroll modules in school boards is being undertaken to improve human resources and payroll systems and processes for school boards and provincial government departments. School boards currently manage human resources with a variety of systems and processes. This project will put in place a common system that will bring consistency within, and across school boards for managing human resources. It also provides economies of scale associated with system consolidation and represents a major upgrade in system infrastructure and access to information.

Planning will continue on the implementation of a single, province-wide, standardized student information system that will allow teachers and administrators to plan, operate, and report on the performance of the public school system, at all levels, in an efficient and effective manner.

Working with school boards, the department will implement the *Regional School Board Accounting Handbook*. This will ensure that all boards are compliant with public sector accounting board guidelines.

Core Business Area Priorities: Human Resources and Legal Services

The department will provide enhanced support to school boards in relation to the administration of the Teachers' Provincial Agreement, the fulfilment of the human resources aspects of the *Financial Measures (2002) Act*, and to maximize the value of dollars spent for legal advice. It will also support school boards in addressing current and emerging issues and enhancing effective human resources planning in the public education system.

The teacher certification processes will be reviewed to ensure efficiency and will examine opportunities to achieve increased mobility into Nova Scotia for teachers in targeted areas.

Professional certification for all new teacher assistants will be established.

7. Budgeting Context

Department of Education - Estimated Budget Expenditures by Core Business			
	Actual 2002–03 ($Millions)	Forecast 2003–04 ($Millions)	Budget 2004–05 ($Millions)
Total Program Expenses - Gross Current	1189.7	1252.2	1254.2
Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	1137.1	1196.8	1209.4
Salaries and Benefits	18.6	20.6	22.9
Funded Staff (FTEs) Net	335.5	335.4	376.4

8. Performance Measures

The goals of the department are outlined in Section 4 of this business plan. This table uses descriptors relevant to each of these goals so that the resulting data can be linked to these goals if required.

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004–05	Strategies
Core Business Area: Primary–12 Education				
Better Educated Nova Scotians	SAIP results (16-year-olds) Percentage at Level 3 or above	Reading (1998): 66% Math (1997): 47% Science (1999): 75%	Science (2004): Increase Reading (2005): 72%[1]	• Expand Active Readers/Lecteurs actifs initiatives to grade 9 • Introduce Writers in Action initiative at grade 6 and Écrivains à l'oeuvre initiative at grade 6 • Implement teaching resources for mathematics grades P–9 • Mandate instructional time allotment for language arts and mathematics for grades P–8 • Implement new science program for grades P–3
	PISA Results (15-year-olds) Scale score	Reading (2000): 521 Math (2000): 513 Science (2000) 516	Reading (2003): 534 Math (2003): 533 Science (2003): 529	
	NSE Results (grade 12) Percent passing	English (2001): 67% Chemistry (2001): 65% Physics (2001): 40%	English: 70% Chemistry: 70% Physics: 60%	
	Graduation Rate	79.1% (1999-2000) (80.0% 2001-02)	Increase	• Implement of Youth Pathways and Transitions strategy

[1] The 2005 reading assessment will be the final SAIP test and will be replaced by the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP). The Math SAIP assessment will no longer be administered in 2006. Results for the Writing 1998 and 2002 tests have been removed as they do not provide an adequate comparison.

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004–05	Strategies
Core Business Area: Primary-12 Education				
Safe and Healthy Learning Environment	Percentage of grade 8 students reporting that they agree with the statement "I feel safe from personal harm"	68% (2001-02)	70%	• Support Code of Conduct implementation through professional development • Implement *Code of Conduct Guidelines* • Implement teacher guide on positive behavioural interventions
	Percentage of schools implementing Physical Education Safety Guidelines	0% (2001-02)	100%	• Implement of Physical Education Safety Guidelines
	Percentage of schools implementing Science Safety Guidelines	0% (2001-02)	100%	• Implement of Science Safety Guidelines

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004–05	Strategies
Core Business Area: Primary-12 Education				
Healthy students	Percentage of students in grades 7, 9, 10 and 12, using cigarettes at least once in the past year	36.1% (1998)	Decrease	• Implement of new curriculum and resources for Health Education grades 4-6 • Provision of Smoke-Free for Live resources • Participate in projects that examine the relationship between health and education
	Percentage of physically active students in grades 3, 7, and 11	PACY Research Study 2002	Increase	• Implement of physical education curriculum and related time requirements • Pilot Activ8 resources • Continue active school communities pilots
Informed and involved parents	Number of hits on interactive website and downloads of resource material	To be developed	Increase	• Launch innovative and useful interactive website
Accessibility	primary–12 computer ratio	1:9.3 Pentium 200 or greater 1:6.2 all computers (2002) 1:6.7 Pentium 200 or greater 1:5.1 all computers (2003)	5:1 all computers (target set for 2005/06)	• Continue Information Economy Initiative in grades 4–6 • Continue Technology Recycling Program

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004-05	Strategies
Core Business Area: Primary-12 Education				
Responsive and flexible learning environment	Number of recommendations of *BLAC Report* implemented	2001: 13 of 30 recommendations implemented	2005: 20 of 30 recommendations implemented	• Continue implementation of BLAC report recommendations • Provide workshops for African Nova Scotian parents on supporting children's learning • Provide additional student support workers
	Percent of schools in-servicing Racial Equity Policy	0% (2001-02)	100%	• Provide professional development for Racial Equity Policy
	Number of French curriculum courses in Acadian schools	Based on number of French curriculum courses currently available in Acadian schools	Increase	• Consult on specific needs • Implement recommendations • Complete full implementation of Français Pré-emploi Histoire du Canada 11 and Études acadiennes 11
	Number of courses implemented to reflect ethnocultural diversity	2002 (3 new courses)	Additional 4 courses	• Implement African Heritage Literature 12 pilot • Support implementation of African Canadian Studies 11, Gaelic Studies 11, Mi'kmaq Studies 10 • Implement Mi'kmaw Language 7 • Develop Mi'kmaw Language 8 and 9 • Develop Gaelic Language 10
Improved accountability/ reporting of results	Reporting of Assessment Results	First Minister's Report in 2001-02 First Assessment report in 2004-05	Annually Annually	• Publish *Minister's Report to Parents* • Publish Elementary Literacy Assessment Results

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004–05	Strategies
Core Business Area: Higher Education				
Better Educated Nova Scotians	Percent of Nova Scotians aged 25–54 with post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree	58% (2000) (59.1% 2002)	Increase	• Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities discussions • Nova Scotia Community College growth strategy • Université Sainte-Anne-Collège de l'Acadie merger • Improvements to the Student Assistance Program
	Number of diplomas, certificates and degrees issued by Nova Scotia institutions	12,124 (1998)	Increase	
Accessibility	Percent of Nova Scotians aged 18-24 accessing post-secondary education	42% of Nova Scotians aged 18-24 (1999-2000)	Increase	• Improvements to the Student Assistance Program • Nova Scotia Community College growth strategy
	Percent of PSE students attending NSCC*	16.2% (2002)	Increase	
	Percent of public library use through Virtual Library	27% (2002-03)	Increase	• Promote use of remote access • Make more resources available on-line
Young Nova Scotians making a successful transition to the workforce	Percent of students who default on their student loan payments	29% (2002-03)	Reduce	• Implement Debt Reduction Policy • Develop and implement Designation Policy

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004-05	Strategies
Core Business Area: Skills and Learning				
Better Educated Nova Scotians	Number of certifications issued through the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Program	641 (2001-02) (800 2002-03)	Increase from base year	• Youth Apprenticeship • Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative • Construction Trades Skill Development Initiative • Apprenticeship and Construction Trades Training Partnership
	Number of adult Nova Scotians graduating with the NS High School Graduation Diploma for adults	154 (2001-02) (410 2002-03)	Increase	• Administration of the Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults
	Number of Nova Scotians successfully completing the GED Tests	1638 (2000-01) (1000 2002-03)	1700[2]	• Administration of the GED Testing Service
Access to Adult Education	Number of participants in Workplace/ Workforce Education programs	1000 (2001 estimate) (1,200 2002-03)	Increase	• Development of Workplace Education and Workforce Adjustment Programs

[2] This number has been revised to 900. Fewer people are writing the GED, perhaps because the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults provides other options. Also, in 2002 more people took the exam prior to announced changesto the GED. Since the 2002 GED test series, more examinees are struggling with math.

Descriptor	Measure	Data	Target 2004–05	Strategies
	Number of adult learners enrolled in literacy and upgrading programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning	4000 (2002-03)	4200	• Implementation of the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning • Community Learning Initiative
Young Nova Scotians engaged in government decisions affecting their communities	Number of youth participating in discussions of issues	2002-03 Total: 172 Youth Advisory Council: 19 Provincial Student Education Council: 28 Other: 125	Increase opportunities for youth to impact policy and program development	• Support of the Provincial Student Education Council (PSEC) and the Nova Scotia Youth Advisory Council YAC) • Maintenance and promotion of the Youth Secretariat website
	Thoughtful and effective discussion of issues by YAC and PSEC	Topics addressed: Youth Advisory Council: 17 Provincial Student Education Council: 7	The impact of the work carried out by YAC and PSEC members shows continuous improvement	